

fees by kicking poor working people off of Medicaid for failure to pay monthly contributions similar to premiums. This plan forced people making \$10,000 a year, \$5,000 a year, or even homeless people with virtually no income to pay a monthly contribution or be penalized. As a result of Ms. Verma's work, about 2,500 Hoosiers have been cut from care. Evaluations of this plan by independent experts show it is confusing to beneficiaries and has not demonstrated better results than traditional Medicaid expansion. Meanwhile, enrollment is far lower than projected.

During my meeting with her and in her testimony before the Senate Finance Committee, Ms. Verma stated that Medicaid should not be an option for able-bodied people. Ms. Verma seems to think the private sector can serve this population on its own. Based on what we know about the historical affordability challenges in the individual health insurance market, I find this notion hard to believe.

My State is innovating in Medicaid through "rebalancing" from nursing homes to home and community care, integrating behavioral health and primary care, and adopting of innovative new waivers through collaboration with the Federal Government. In fact, Washington State realized more than \$2.5 billion in savings over 15 years through rebalancing efforts; yet Ms. Verma will not commit to a single delivery system reform idea.

Ms. Verma claims Medicaid is a top-down Federal power grab. On the contrary, Medicaid is an optional State program, with all States participating. Every State participates because they know Medicaid is a good strategy for covering a low-income and vulnerable population and supporting their healthcare delivery system. Medicaid is highly flexible right now, and States have wide latitude over eligibility, benefits, provider reimbursements, and overall administration of their Medicaid programs.

Ms. Verma claims Medicaid produces poor outcomes, but she cannot offer a single credible clinical outcome or quality measure that the program is not achieving. Meanwhile, data show that patient satisfaction in Medicaid is high and the program achieves improved public health and clinical outcomes for its patients.

Most concerning, Ms. Verma has repeatedly endorsed the administration and Republicans' plan to permanently cap Medicaid, which would hurt patients, States, health providers, and local economies.

I am voting no on Seema Verma's nomination for CMS Administrator because I cannot endorse a full-scale assault on the Medicaid Program.

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, Seema Verma has a proven track record of helping States create patient-centered healthcare systems that improve quality and access and give individuals and families more control over their healthcare. Due to a family commit-

ment, I was unable to participate in the cloture vote. However, I strongly support Ms. Verma's nomination and look forward to working with her on the many important healthcare issues facing Florida and our country.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

TRIBUTE TO GLEN HANSON

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I have been coming down to the floor for the past several months recognizing Alaskans who make our State great and our country better for all of us. I really enjoy doing this because it gives me an opportunity to share the excellent work my citizens are doing in their communities. It also gives me a few minutes to highlight to all my colleagues here in the Senate—and to some of those Americans who might be watching at home—to talk a little bit more about the unique place I call home and am honored to serve and represent in the Senate.

This week, I would like to honor pilot Glen Hanson, who is right now somewhere flying above racing sled dogs in the far north in Alaska, literally as we speak.

Before I get to how he is helping Alaskans and how he is this week's Alaskan of the Week, let me take you back through a remarkable bit of history that happened in Nome, AK, in 1925, when a diphtheria serum was desperately needed for the children in Nome. The nearest batch of serum was 1,000 miles away in Anchorage, AK. There weren't—and still aren't—any roads that connect Nome to Anchorage. There was very challenging winter weather during this time, so no airplanes could fly. In fact, the nearest train station was over 700 miles away from Nome, so people traveled mostly by dog sled.

On the night of January 27, 1925, musher "Wild Bill" Shannon tied a 20-pound package of serum wrapped in protective fur around his sled. He and his nine dogs started the journey called then the "Great Race of Mercy" across the frozen Alaska land. Miles later, he met up with another racer and another team of dogs, and the relay continued all across Alaska, over 1,000 miles—20 mushers and 150 sled dogs—through some of the world's most rugged terrain and some of the world's most brutal weather. In fact, right now in parts of Alaska where the Iditarod is happening, it is 40 to 50 below zero.

That original race, the Great Race of Mercy, began to be reenacted, with some twists, in 1973 and continues today. In fact, it is going on right now, the Iditarod, the Last Great Race, in my great State. People from all across the world come to participate in it and come to watch it. It is the quintessential Alaskan event that involves the work of hundreds of Alaskans, lodge owners, veterinarians, dogs, dog handlers, volunteers, pilots—hundreds, thousands.

Alaska, as you might know, is home to more veterans per capita than any other State, but we are also home to more pilots per capita than any other State. Our pilots are a vital part of our economy and transportation, and they are a vital part of the Iditarod. In fact, the race couldn't exist without them.

Every year, more than a dozen volunteer pilots load their planes for the Iditarod race with more than 100,000 pounds of dog food, hundreds of bales of hay, and lumber for tents. They fly the veterinarians, the judges, the dog handlers, and so many of the volunteers out to the checkpoints hundreds of miles away. We call them the Iditarod Air Force, and every one of them deserves recognition.

That gets me back to Anchorage resident Glen Hanson, who is our Alaskan of the Week. Glen, along with his brother Bert, is tied among this year's pilots as the longest serving volunteer in the Iditarod Air Force. He began volunteering for the Last Great Race—the Iditarod Air Force—in 1984. Glen has since put in roughly 1,500 hours of volunteer time, making sure that the Last Great Race continues and that the dogs and the mushers are taken care of—taken care of right now in 40 to 50 below zero, as this race is going on.

This year, Glen won the Alaska Air Carriers Association Iditarod Humanitarian Service Award. Upon receiving it, the Air Carriers Association wrote to Glen:

You are obviously an accomplished pilot held in high regard by your peers. While there are many volunteers working to make the race possible, you consistently go above and beyond the call of duty. You are always quietly willing to take every assignment, no matter how unglamorous or uncomfortable. You step up time after time to fly in the challenging air strips to ensure that the musher supplies and race personnel are available to keep the race safe.

Thank you, Glen, for all you do to keep our great Alaska history alive. And thanks to all the pilots in the Iditarod Air Force this year and so many of the other volunteers who keep everybody safe—and are doing it right now during this year's Iditarod. And to all the mushers and these great dogs, good luck. Everyone involved makes this truly the last great race in America.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO MASTER SERGEANT KEARY MILLER

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, today it is my honor to congratulate retired MSgt Keary Miller of the Kentucky Air National Guard's 123 Special